

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
PUBLIC HEARING
Tuesday, February 24, 2009
10:00 AM in Room 1E of the LOB

Written Testimony
from
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Mentors of the Developing Tomorrow's Professionals**

On behalf of the Academic Mentors of the Developing Tomorrow's Professionals program, we would like to express our appreciation to Senator Handley, Representative Willis and all the members of this Committee. We are proud of a group breaking program that addresses the true barriers and issues that limit the educational performance and potential of the young men of color who we serve.

INTRODUCTION

Developing Tomorrow's Professionals (DTP) is a carefully constructed program of training, instruction and support services designed to address the needs of young men of color (Black and Hispanic), providing training, experiences and associations leading to secondary academic achievement, four-year college matriculation, retention and graduation from a four year college.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The DTP program is specifically designed for Black and Hispanic male students (grades 9-11, and adult education), ages 15-19, enrolled in those school districts with a Black and Hispanic student population of 30% or more. These students have been identified by their respective schools as academically underachieving, in need of encouragement and support services.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Orientation Phase

Young men selected by their high school principals for the DTP will begin their commitments by completing a three hour on-line orientation course designed to provide them with the skills to navigate through the DTP's aggressive assessment package. Once that requirement has been met all our young men will go through a full-day of intensive orientation that will emphasize individual potential and talents, etiquette training, and professional attire and decorum. The DTP developed "Principles of a Man" instruction will begin during the orientation and become a foundation piece of each week's instruction.

Academic Saturdays

Students of the DTP program will be required to attend ten consecutive academic Saturdays at a state university, where the young men will be engaged in four hours of instruction each Saturday. The course includes sequential instruction, targeted at building individual skills in critical reading and writing, task & time management, high school and college assessment analysis, study skills, college note-taking, etiquette training, articulation and discourse, and the integration of the “Principles of a Man” philosophy.

Academic Mentors

Young men will be grouped into cohorts of 4-5 students with an academic mentor, an undergraduate or graduate student (Black and Hispanic men). Academic mentors will help guide, encourage and engage our young men through all units of instruction and assessment.

Professional Mentors

Each young man will be provided with a mentor (Black and Hispanic) in a workplace environment that is designed to expand the frame of reference of the student to positions of responsibility and authority in various professions while enhancing a greater appreciation for academic achievement.

Fall Math & Writing

All students of the DTP program will participate in an 18-hour math and reading on-line course. This course focuses on the application of math/reading skills and techniques as they relate to college level work.

Student Incentives

- hourly performance-based stipend for completion of the entire 100 hour program;
- Selection and purchase of professional attire; and
- Laptop computer that includes software applicable to college level demands and work.

DEVELOPMENTAL OBJECTIVES – 2008-2010

- Expansion – Increase the service area sites to include two of the following geographic areas contingent upon gaining partnership with a 4-year university in these areas (Bridgeport, Norwalk, Waterbury, Hartford, Stamford).
- Build capacity (Academic Saturday Teachers) – Train 10-15 persons (men of color) to teach and manage the Academic Saturday component of the program at the service area sites where the DTP is offered.
- Build capacity (Professional Mentor Recruiting) – Train 5-10 persons to become professional mentor recruiters in the identified service areas.